

In the Specification

Please amend the Specification as follows:

Please amend the specification beginning on page 12, line 14 as follows:

Fig. 40 is a diagrammatic front elevational view, partly in section, of still another alternative embodiment of suture wire drive assembly; [[and]]

Fig. 41 is a side elevational view, partly in section, of the assembly of Fig. 40[[.]];

Please add the following new paragraphs beginning on page 12, line 19:

Fig. 42 is a cross sectional view showing the wire drive of Fig. 29 located adjacent a distal end of an elongated shaft of the instrument; and

Fig. 43 is a cross sectional view showing the wire drive of Fig. 34 located adjacent a distal end of an elongated shaft of the instrument.

*Let's  
5.12.06*  
Fig. 44 is a sectional view of part of a drive wheel portion of a drive barrel assembly showing an embodiment having multiple grooves to engage suture wires of different sizes.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 44, line 6 as follows:

Referring to Fig. 29, it will be seen that instead of wheels 56, 92 engaging the suture wire 58, there may be provided opposed roller-driven treads, or conveyor belts 520, 522. While the belts 520, 522 may be used in place of the wheels 56, 92 in the drive barrel assembly 80, they may alternatively be placed further forward, or distally[[.]] in the instrument, as shown in Fig. 42, so as to effect pulling of the wire 58 through the instrument, rather than pushing the wire, thereby eliminating the aforementioned problems of bending and buckling, associated with pushing a flexible strand.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 45, line 11 as follows:

In Figs. 33-35, it will be seen that instead of the belt or carrier wire or thread 522, there may be provided a tube 540 driven by rollers 542 (one shown in Figs. 33-35). The tube 540 is provided with a lengthwise endless slit 544 and is of a size to house the suture wire 58. At the delivery end 532 of the assembly, the wire 58 is guided, as by the blade 534, shown in Fig. 30, out of the tube 540, by way of the slit 544. As in the previously described embodiments

Serial No.: 10/051,322  
Conf. No.: 7967

- 3 -

Art Unit: 3731

featuring conveyor belts, or the like, the drive assembly shown in Figs. 33-35 preferably is placed near the distal end of the instrument, as shown in Fig. 43, such that the wire 58 may be in large measure pulled, rather than pushed.